



Lands 20/20 Standard Operating Procedure

Selecting Conservation and Recreation Lands for Acquisition

This standard operating procedure (SOP) applies to all WDFW employees and to all potential WDFW land acquisition projects where WDFW funds, spending authority, or funding received by WDFW, are used for land acquisition including all donations.

Land acquisition is an on-going process. This SOP is intended to lay out the basic flow of an annual review and approval process to bring rigor and transparency to WDFW's land acquisition work. This annual process IS NOT a replacement for the on-going local, regional, and statewide coordination and outreach that accompanies the overall body of land acquisition work of the agency. The communication and coordination of that overall body of work is the joint responsibility of the Lands Division Manager and the Regional Directors in coordination with relevant Executive Management Team members. Close coordination between the Regional Directors and the Lands Division Manager is essential for the success of this conservation tool.

Land Acquisition Projects include:

- 1) Any project that would result in the acquisition of real property interests by WDFW, regardless of fund source or sponsorship, including donations, mitigation lands, fee simple, and conservation easements; AND
- 2) Any project that would result in the acquisition of real property interests by others where WDFW facilitated the receipt of acquisition funding (e.g., pass through grants) and is liable for long-term obligations.

Exemptions

The Director may exempt a project from the annual Lands 20/20 process described in this SOP with pre-approval from the Lands Division Manager on a case-by-case basis. To proceed with the process please contact the Lands 20/20 Coordinator for guidance.

Once pre-approval is obtained all exemptions must proceed through the regional approval process using the Lands 20/20 application form, including applicable outreach components. The completed applications are sent to the Lands 20/20 Coordinator and must be reviewed and approved by the Lands Division Manager and Wildlife Program Director before being presented to the Director for final agency Lands 20/20 approval.

** Exemptions must proceed through tribal consultation as mentioned below after preliminary approval and before director signature.

Approval Life

A project that is approved through the Lands 20/20 process can be moved forward through the Lands 20/20 coordinator into the stage of securing funding and completing the real estate transaction. Lands 20/20 application approval lasts for 6 years, after which, a new Lands 20/20 approval must be attained in order to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is used and public outreach is met in all decisions to commit to permanent property ownership.

Strategic Acquisition Priorities

The Lands 20/20 process will draw from conservation, recreation, and management priorities as identified by work units throughout the Agency and displayed in the “Conservation Initiative Strategic Acquisition Priorities”.

WDFW Acquisition Principles

Acquisitions will be consistent with the following WDFW Acquisition Principles.

- Optimize, pursue, and use partnerships to identify and prioritize land acquisitions, nurture collaborative support, and leverage capacity.
- Evaluate whether acquisition is the best conservation alternative to achieve the desired result. Evaluate alternative tools prior to acquisition– e.g., incentives, different land stewardship by current owner, or education. If acquisition is the best alternative, then evaluate options to acquire the real property interests (e.g., easement, fee title, donation, exchange) and whether WDFW should be the owner or if ownership by another natural resource agency, NGO, etc. is a better fit.
- Pursue lands that provide long-term opportunities for public recreation and/or create access to existing public land.
- Pursue lands that will provide long-term ecological value considering climate change impacts, such as sea level rise and possible range shifts.
- Place a higher value on acquisitions that create blocks of ownership that increase function, value and resiliency to disturbance and make management more efficient.
- As we move spatially further away from existing public holdings, particularly with smaller tracts, pursue easements or other non-fee title protection.
- Prioritize lands that are ecologically or socially important and are at risk to loss to a non-compatible use in the near term.

ACTION BY:	ACTION:
Lands 20/20 Coordinator	Coordinates the overall Lands 20/20 process statewide. Prepares communication of annual process, includes Lands 20/20 announcement, establish timeline requirements, assures that all Lands 20/20 documents are updated and available for staff.
Lands Division/Diversity staff	Informs Regional Management Teams (RMTs) of changes in WDFW Strategic Acquisition Priorities as they occur. Meet with RMTs as requested to discuss updates and expectations.
Lands Division Manager	Approve and forward Lands 20/20 announcement to be sent to staff by the Director.
Employee	<p>Identifies potential land acquisition projects and verifies whether project was approved through Lands 20/20 previously (keeping in mind the 6 years lifespan of the Lands 20/20 approval) by reviewing the master list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Yes, update previous application if necessary and proceed to Regional Management Team review. • If No, the project must go through the standard Lands 20/20 process. <p>Collaborate with Wildlife Area Manager to determine the value of the potential addition and submit the name of potential Land Acquisition project(s) along with a descriptive summary to Lands Agent for review. Lands Agent presents potential Lands 20/20 prospects to the Regional Management Team.</p>
Lands Agents	Coordinate the Lands 20/20 applications in their region, including coordinating and scheduling discussions with and between appropriate regional staff, including the Regional Director and Regional Management Team, to ensure consistent adherence to timelines and application requirements. Ensure pre-project real estate due diligence.
Regional Management Team	<p>Validates if acquisition is the right conservation tool and if WDFW is the right landowner.</p> <p>Designates Regional Proposal Sponsor, develops outreach strategy and identifies outreach lead(s).</p>
Outreach Lead(s)	Conducts partner and targeted tribal and stakeholder outreach to develop local support. Outreach includes at a minimum Tribes, County Commissioners, local conservation partners, as well as any other

	<p>outreach as required by statute or rules of a potential funder. All done in coordination with Regional Director.</p>
Proposal Sponsor	<p>In advance of application deadline, conducts initial cross program review with District Team. Verifies that project is consistent with regional priorities.</p> <p>Completes Lands 20/20 Application and forwards it to the Regional Lands Agent.</p>
Regional Lands Agent	<p>Reviews Lands 20/20 Application for completeness and consistency with land acquisition policy requirements. Ensures appropriate pre- project real estate due diligence.</p> <p>If not complete or consistent, returns Application to the Proposal Sponsor for completion. Assists Proposal Sponsor in application assistance as necessary.</p> <p>When complete and consistent, forwards Application to Regional Management Team for final review.</p>
Regional Director/ Regional Management Team	<p>Ensures acquisition proposal has been reviewed by appropriate district team, wildlife area manager, and affected programs at the district and headquarters levels.</p> <p>Validates local outreach and confirms level of support concerning proposed transaction as described in detail in the application. Letters of support are encouraged and may be requested by the Regional Director or outreach lead.</p> <p>Regional Director approves or denies application. If approved, Regional Director signs the application and forwards the regional proposal package of applications with a cover memo to the Lands 20/20 Coordinator.</p>

<p>Lands 20/20 Coordinator</p>	<p>Receives and reviews Lands 20/20 Applications and ensures completeness.</p> <p>Convenes Technical Team and Funding Team for application review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Technical Team should include members from each Region who are responsible for representing their Region’s proposals. This team finalizes the list of projects for which funding will be pursued; this final list is referred to as the statewide package. • Initiate need for DAHP/Tribal Review consultation per EO 21-02 and Policy 5007 on projects moving forward to funding team. • The Funding Team should include representation from Real Estate Services, Lands Conservation and Restoration Section, and related grant experts and consult with project sponsors. This team finalizes proposed funding opportunities and levels for the statewide package. <p>Ensures that Technical Team and Funding Team outcome is communicated in a timely manner to RDs, RMT’s, Lands Agents and Project Sponsors.</p> <p>Coordinates presentation for EMT members to review the list of projects and funding opportunities. EMT recommends to the Director the list of projects to move forward for public review and comment.</p>
<p>Director</p>	<p>Approves the initial list of projects and initial funding allocations to move forward for public review and comment.</p>
<p>Lands 20/20 Coordinator/Land Division Manager</p>	<p>Coordinates Tribal Consultation according to agency policy and procedure. Solicits/coordinates public review (posts to WDFW website). Notifies Fish and Wildlife Commission of Public Notice.</p> <p>Incorporates public comments and reviews with the Director.</p> <p>Presents recommended projects, funding allocations, and summary of public comments to the Fish and Wildlife Commission.</p>
<p>Director</p>	<p>Approves final list of acquisition projects and associated funding targets.</p>
<p>Lands 20/20 Coordinator/</p>	<p>Notifies project sponsors of final approval and provides them the public comments received on their project.</p>

Proposal Sponsor	Coordinates with regional lands agent to identify appropriate grant lead; coordinates with grant lead and Real Estate Services to prepare and submit land acquisition proposals to identified funding sources.
-------------------------	--

**When funding is secured, the project management moves into Real Estate Services via staff responsible for Land Acquisition due diligence completion and associated grant management with engagement of other regional and Lands Division staff as necessary.